4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

practice throughout the whole district by any person whether European or native. 231 778 656 648

J. S. FRASER, *Lt. Col.*
and Commissioner.

Mercara, 16th January 1835.

Whether the sanction of the Government of India was obtained to this prohibition is not apparent, but the Coorgs have always, up to this time, regarded it as binding on the British Government; and, under these circumstances, we must await the dissipation by education of existing prejudices on the subject on the part of the people.

Not venerated like the cow is the bison (*Can.* kádi; Bos cavifrons) which is killed by the Coorgs without hesitation; its flesh, however, is only eaten by the lowest classes. It lives in herds throughout the thickest forests and in the highest hills, especially in Marenád and Hormalnád. The male stands nearly 6 feet high at the shoulder, but disproportionately low behind, and reaches the length of 9 feet from nose to root of tail; the tail itself is almost 3 feet long. Its hump is rather small. When young, the colour of the bison is of a dark reddish hue, which changes with age into a greyish black, the belly, legs as far as the knee-joint, breast and face being, however, of a dirty, whitish tinge. The whole body, especially the dewlap, is covered with long hair and the eyes are of a light blue colour. The horns are short and thick at the base, but gradually become thinner, leaving the tips small and sharp; they are remarkable for the symmetry of their curvature, take a fine polish and the fortunate sportsman may be proud of the trophy. The hide, which is very thick, is used for covering shields. Naturally timid and of retiring habits, preferring shady woods to open glades, except in the cooler parts of the day, the bison, when alarmed or wounded, charges headlong with mad fury his imaginary or

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distinguished for bravery. Apparently anticipating the present military regulation, they shave their chin but sport mighty whiskers! The colour of the Coorgs is lighter than might be expected under this latitude. Their mode of life and pride of race impart to their whole bearing an air of manly independence and dignified self-assertion, well sustained by their peculiar and picturesque costume.

The principal Coorg dress is a long coat (kupasa) of white or blue cotton or dark coloured cloth and even velvet. It reaches below the knees, is open in front, has, if not white, short sleeves under which longer ones of a different colour extend to the waist, and is held together by a red or blue sash of cotton or silk which is several times wound round the waist and which holds the never failing Coorg knife, with ivory or silver handle and chains of the same metal. A red kerchief or the peculiarly fashioned turban, which is large and flat at the top and covers a portion of the back of the neck, forms the head-dress. The feet are bare or protected with light sandals. A necklace of the berry of Rudrákshi (Elæocarpus ganitrus), silver or gold bracelets on the wrists, and silver and gold earrings with pearls or precious stones complete their festive costume. Those who are in possession of the Coorg-medal or the lunulate ornament called Kokaládi[2] do not fail to suspend it round their neck, as may be seen on the front-illustration. Their every day dress is of course of a more simple nature. The Coorg warrior looks more imposing. His dress is of the same cut, but of coarser material and shorter. In addition to his handy waist-knife (Picha-katti), he wears on his back in a strong clasp of brass the curved, broad-bladed Coorg knife (Odu-katti) which is seen in the hand of the figure in our illustration. In a hand-to-hand fight it was a most formidable weapon and since the young Coorgs have no longer Mussulman or Nair antagonists to decapitate, they display at their feasts the strength of their

[1] [Errata: This should read "wrist". See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, P. 493 -- Analyst]

[2] [Errata: This should read "Kokadádi." -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

arms and the sharp edge of their knives by beheading pigs or cutting at a blow through the trunk of thick plantain trees. The long matchlock gun is now more a weapon of curiosity than of practical use, except with the poorer Coorgs, the wealthier sportsmen having supplied themselves with English rifles of the best description. Their ancient arms and ornaments were manufactured with the most simple tools by natives of Coorg.

The Coorg Rajahs used to reward men distinguished for personal bravery with silver and gold bangles, or with an ornamented large knife bearing the Rajah's stamp ☋ upon the blade and these tokens are kept as sacred heirlooms and worn on grand occasions only.

The personal appearance of the Coorg women is not less striking than that of the men. They are remarkably fair, of goodly stature, well shaped and many are really handsome before the betel-chewing, which generally begins after marriage, disfigures their regular features and blackens their otherwise brilliant teeth. Their festive costume—and the ordinary dress differs only in quality—is one of the most becoming that can be seen in India. A white or light blue cotton jacket with long sleeves fits tight and is closed up to the neck. A long piece of white muslin or blue cotton stuff forms the skirt, being several times wrapped round the waist and tied by means of a string, so as to make the skirt fall in graceful folds almost down to the ancles whilst one end of it covers the bosom and is knotted together on the right shoulder. To give fulness to the skirt the other end is arranged in folds, which, contrary to the fashion of other Hindu women are gathered behind, a sensible arrangement and most convenient for unobstructed activity in house and field. This peculiarity did not escape the notice of the prying Brahmins who of course accounted for it by a silly Puránic legend, which at